

# NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **SUPERVISORS ANNOUNCE PLANS FOR TRACKING GANG MEMBERS**

SAN BERNARDINO – The San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors today unanimously approved a proposal by Vice-Chairman Gary Ovitt and First District Supervisor Brad Mitzelfelt calling for a pilot program to track parolee gang members in San Bernardino County.

The Board of Supervisors will send an official request to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger calling for the creation of a pilot program to track gang members in the County. The program would require gang members released on parole to wear GPS tracking devices.

“This will give us one more tool to solve and deter gang-related crime in San Bernardino County,” said Supervisor Ovitt. “With this program, gang members who commit crimes are going to be caught and sent back to prison.”

It is estimated that there are at least 13,000 gang members belonging to about 300 different gangs in San Bernardino County.

San Bernardino County officials directed Probation officers early this month to begin using GPS devices to monitor known gang members currently on County Probation. A state pilot program would expand that tracking to paroled gang members who are under the supervision of the state Department of Corrections.

Supervisor Mitzelfelt today announced that local law enforcement officials are currently investigating a gang-related homicide in the High Desert where it was found that a gang member wearing a GPS device was present at the scene of the homicide. The use of GPS technology is already showing promise in helping to solve crimes, he said.

On February 6, supervisors approved more than \$500,000 to create a specialized unit in the District Attorney's Office to seek civil court injunctions against gangs. “With the use of GPS devices, we will be able to make sure gang members don't violate injunctions by returning to their former turf after being released from jail or prison,” said Mitzelfelt.

There would be no cost to the county to implement the county phase of the program. Sentinel, the current vendor for the GPS devices utilized by the County, is providing the GPS devices for the pilot program at no cost. Monthly access charges are billed to the probationers who are fitted with the devices.